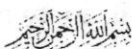


Islamic Economic System, Principles And Objectives

Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi



Islamic Economic System

QUESTIONS

I have been asked to express my views on certain problems, which have been put in the form of questions. I will read them out to you so that you may know the scope of the argument.¹

The first question is: has Islam suggested any economic system? If it has, then what are the outlines and features of this system, and what is the position of land, labour, capital and organization in it?

The second question is: can the “*Zakat*” and “*Sadaqa*” be used for socio-economic welfare?

The third is: that can we implement an interest-free economy?

And the fourth is: what, according to Islam, is the relationship between economic, political, social and religious systems?

A detailed reply to each one of these questions would require the writing of a book in itself. But as the audience consists of highly educated persons, for whom indications and hints can be enough I will discuss each question briefly.

¹ This speech was delivered before a discussion group of the students of Punjab University, Lahore.

The first question is in two parts. First, has Islam suggested any economic system and, if it has, what are its outlines and features? The second portion is about the position of land, labour, capital and organisation in it. The reply to the first part of the question is that Islam has definitely put forward an economic system. This, however, does not mean that it has prepared a complete economic system, in detail, for all time. What it means is that Islam has given us basic principles with the help of which we ourselves can mould the economic structure in every age. A close study of the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith* makes it clear that Islam's method, in relation to each aspect of life is, so to speak, to establish its four corners within which we can develop and formulate that aspect.

We are not allowed to go outside the limits thus set, within these limits we can work out the details according to our needs, experiences and circumstances. Ranging from the problems of domestic life to various aspects of culture and civilisation, Islam has guided man in this way. Its process concerning economic system is similar. Here too it has given us some principles and has put forth some limits within which we can build our economic system. The details can be and have been worked out in relation to each age. Within these limits our *fuqaha* (jurisprudents) had compiled laws, concerning the economic system of their time, in great detail. Whatever the *fuqaha* compiled and prepared is based on the principles of Islam.

Out of these details, whatever serves our needs today can be taken in its original shape and for the new needs which have cropped up, new laws can be added. However, these new laws must of necessity be based on and taken from the principles of Islam and should not violate the limits set by it.

Objectives

Before I discuss the principles Islam has given us, it is necessary that you should properly understand the objectives Islam has in view. Without having an understanding of these objectives, we cannot understand the principles of their application according to needs and circumstances or the compilation of detailed law according to their true spirit.

In the matter of economy, the first thing which Islam considers is that man's freedom should be safeguarded and limitations should be set on it only so far as they are essential for the welfare of mankind. Islam attaches much importance to human freedom. The reason is that in Islam man as individual is accountable before Allah. This accountability is not collective. Each person has to answer for his deeds. Because of this responsibility, it is necessary that he should be given the maximum possible chances to develop his personality according to his own traits, according to his own abilities and according to his own choice. That is why along with religious and political freedom, Islam gives importance to economic freedom also.

Religious and political liberties come to an end if there is no economic freedom. You can yourself estimate that if a person is economically at the mercy of another he cannot act on his own free choice and opinion even if he has such a choice and opinion. So Islam gives us such principles for our economic system which provide maximum freedom to the individual only to this extent to which they are actually necessary, for human welfare and prosperity.

The second basic objective Islam has before it is the moral and ethical development and growth of man. For this it is necessary that society as a whole should give the

individual the chance to do good on his own initiative so that he may acquire the qualities of generosity, sympathy, sensitivity to the pain of others, as well as other moral values. Due to this reason, Islam does not bank upon law alone for the establishment of economic justice. Instead it gives the greatest importance to the reform of man's inner being. It tries to change his tastes and his way of thinking and arouses a strong moral sense within him which makes him a just person. Where these efforts are not successful a Muslim society should be morally vigilant enough to keep such elements within limits through social pressure. When even this does not succeed Islam uses law and enforces justice by force. From the Islamic point of view every social system, which tries to establish justice by force of law alone, and which ties up people in such a way that they become incapable of doing good on their own accord, is on the wrong track.

The third thing to remember is that Islam is the religion of oneness and fraternity. Hence it does not divide human society into classes and instead of preaching class conflict, it shows the way of sympathy and co-operation to the classes which nature itself has produces.

We will be able to understand the proper spirit of the principles underlying this economic system only when we keep these three things in view. Now will briefly mention the basic principles of this economic system.

Principles

Within certain limits Islam accepts private property and in the matter of private property, it does not make distinctions between means of production and consumer goods. It gives a general right of property to individuals, but limits it with restrictions. This is not an Islamic concept that distinctions should be made between means

of production and consumer goods and that means of production should not be allowed to become private property. From the Islamic point of view, a person has the right to own land or a machine or factory just as he has the right to own clothes, utensils and furniture. In Islam, the entire economic life is mapped out in such a way that within certain limits, man is free to earn his livelihood. As I mentioned earlier, Islam gives great importance to human freedom and on the basis of this freedom, it shapes the entire structure of civilized living. The right to private property in economic means and resources is necessary to safeguard this freedom.

If the right to private property is snatched away and collective ownership is imposed on all economic resources, individual liberty will inevitably come to an end because, after all, the members of society become the servants of the organization which controls the economic resources of the entire country.

Another important principle of Islam's economic system is that instead of equal distribution of wealth it desires equitable distribution. It certainly does not aim at distribution the means of livelihood equally between all persons. Those who have read the Holy Qur'an will know that nowhere in the universe do we find equal distribution. Equal distribution is against nature, itself. Do all human beings have the same sort of health? Or equal intelligence, or equal memories? Are all human beings equal in beauty, strength and ability? Are all human beings born into the same sort of life and conditions and do they encounter the same problems? If there is no equality in all these things, then what is the meaning of equality in distribution of wealth and means of production? In practice it is not possible and whenever it is artificially imposed it will inevitably fail and produce wrong results. So, Islam does

not call for equal distribution of economic means or the fruits of the economy. It wants just and equitable distribution and for the sake of justice, it has put forward certain rules.

Islam's Economic Regulations

The first of these rules is that in the means for the acquisition of wealth, Islam establishes a distinction between the permissible (*halal*) and the prohibited (*haram*). On the one hand, it gives individual right to freely strive for economic betterment and whatever he earns is his property, while on the other, in the methods of striving and earning, it has established the bounds of the permissible and prohibited. According to its regulations, a person has full freedom to earn his livelihood by *halal* methods. In this way he can earn as much as he wishes and in whatever profession he likes. He is the rightful owner of whatever he earns in this way. No one has the right to limit or seize his wealth. However, he does not have the right to earn even a penny by prohibited means or methods. He can be stopped by force from earning this way and he is not the rightful owner of wealth thus earned.

Prohibited Means and Methods of Getting Wealth

Islam has forbidden, prohibited and declared illegal, wealth gained from the following sources: deception, bribery, fraud, mis-appropriation of wealth from the *bait-ul-mal* (state treasury), theft, by use of faulty weights and measures, those businesses which spread indecency and licentiousness, prostitution, the manufacture or trade of wine and other intoxicants, interest, gambling and all those methods of trade and business which are based on cheating or pressurising, or those which lead to conflict

and hate, or those which are against justice and public welfare. Islam puts an end to these things by force of law. Apart from these it prohibits hoarding and monopolies which make it impossible for the common man to make use of wealth and the means of producing wealth.

With the exception of these methods, whatever a person earns belongs to him rightfully. He can make use of this *halal* wealth himself or transfer it to other as a gift or a favour or use it for producing more wealth or leave it as inheritance for his descendants. On these rightful earnings no limitations can be put at any stage. If a person, practicing permitted methods can become a millionaire, Islam does not stop him. However prosperous he may become, he must use only the methods permitted by Islam. However, it is not easy to become a millionaire by the permitted methods. Only very rarely can this happen because honest living hardly ever allows one to become a millionaire. But Islam does not raise unreasonable obstacles and does not stop people from lawfully earning as much as they like.

Restraints on Use of Wealth

Restrictions have been put on the use of wealth which one may acquire. One shape the use of wealth can take is spending on one's self. This expenditure is limited by Islam in such a way that it should not be harmful to society or for the individual himself. Another shape is hoarding. Islam does not like this. It recommends that whatever wealth one saves should not remain static, but should be put into circulation by the permitted methods. Islam, by a special law, imposes *Zakat* on accumulated wealth, so that it may be used for social welfare and to help the weaker sections of society. The Holy Qur'an strongly condemns those who try to accumulate treasures.

It says that those who hoard gold and silver will be branded with their collected ingots in the depths of hell. The reason is that God has made wealth for the benefit of mankind. No one has the right to keep it static with himself. You can earn by lawful means, spend on your needs and bring into circulation whatever is left over by lawful means. This is why Islam has also prohibited *ehtekar*. It means deliberate holding back necessary goods so that their supply in the market may decrease, resulting in higher prices. This practice is illegal according to Islamic law. If you have some goods for sale and there is demand for them in the market, there is no reason why you should refuse to sell them. Refusal to sell for the sake of creating artificial scarcity makes a person a robber instead of a trader.

This is also the reason why Islam is against unnecessary monopolies: they stop the common man from making use of the economic resources of the country.

Islam does not permit the control of certain sectors of the economy by certain special persons or families or classes to the exclusion of all others. Only a monopoly which is absolutely essential for the collective good of society is allowed. Otherwise, as a principle, Islam wishes to give everyone the opportunity to make his best efforts in this field.

A third form which the use of wealth can take is that it can be used to earn more wealth. Here too the restrictions mentioned above apply and the *haram* methods cannot be used.

The Rights of Society

Then on an individual's wealth Islam, in a number of ways, imposes the rights of the group among which he lives. In the Holy Qur'an you will see that the right of *zul*

qurba have been mentioned. This means that apart from his own self, his relatives also have a right on a person's wealth. It is the responsibility of each member of society that if he has more wealth than his needs require he should, according to ability, help those people among his relatives who do not have enough wealth to fulfill their needs. If all the families in the country were to feel this responsibility as a whole, the problems of a large number of families in the country would be solved. You will notice that while referring to the *haquq-ul-ibad* (the rights of God's creatures) the rights of the mother, father and relatives are mentioned first. Similarly the Qur'an also imposes upon each person's wealth the rights of the neighbours. This means that the relatively well-to-do people in each community, in each lane and by-lane, are responsible for those who are not so well-to-do and are in need of help.

The Qur'an makes each well-to-do person responsible, within his capacity, for helping those who ask for help as well as those who need help ("in their wealth is the right of *sa'ail* and *mahrum*"). *Sa'il* is one who asks for help. This is not a reference to professional beggars who have made begging their source of livelihood. Here that person is meant who is actually needy and who appeals to you for help. You should make sure that he is actually needy. If you find out that he actually needs help, and if you have money more than sufficient for your needs then you should know that he too has a right on your money. *Mahrum* is a person who, although he does not ask for help, does not have enough to provide for himself. If you know of such a person, remember that he has a right on your wealth.

Apart from these rights Islam gives a general command of *infaq fi sabeel Allah* (spending in the way of

God) and thus establishes the rights of the state and the entire society on an individual's wealth. The purpose is that a Muslim should be generous, open-hearted and a sensitive person, conscious of the needs of human beings. He should freely spend out his wealth on every good work for the fulfilment of social and religious needs, not for any selfish motives but only for the pleasure of Allah. This is a powerful moral spirit which Islam creates in every Muslim through its teachings and its training and through the cumulative effects of existence in an Islamic society. The purpose is that the individual, on his initiative, and without the use of force, should desire to help in social welfare.

Zakat

After this voluntary *infaq* there is another thing which Islam has made obligatory. This is *Zakat* levied on accumulated capital, trade goods, various forms of business, agricultural produce and cattle wealth. It is used to put economically weaker sections of society on their feet. These two things (*infaq* and *zakat*) can be compared to *nafl* and *farz* prayers. There is no limit to the number of *nafl* prayers one may perform. According to a person's desire for holiness and nearness to God he may perform as many *nawafil* as he wishes. But *farz* prayer are obligatory and one must perform them. Similar is the case of spending in the way of Allah. One kind of spending is that which is *nafl* and has been left to your wishes and the second kind is that which becomes obligatory if a person's wealth exceeds a fixed limit.

Please do not make the mistake of thinking that *zakat* is some kind of a tax. Actually this is not a tax but a form of worship which, like prayers, is one of pillars of Islam. There is tremendous difference between *zakat* and

tax. Tax is imposed perforce and the person who is taxed may not be happy about it. Also he is not a believer or follower of the person who imposes the tax. Nor does he has to believe in it and may try to evade it in various ways, and this evasion does not change his beliefs. The basic difference between the two is that tax is actually imposed to make up for the expenditure incurred in providing certain services which are supposed to benefit the tax-payer himself. The principle behind it is that when we feel the need for some facilities and want the government to provide us with them we make a certain donation in ratio with our wealth. This tax is actually a kind of donation which is taken from us by force of law for those social services as a whole from which we ourselves may also benefit. As opposed to this, *zakat* is a form of worship as prayers are a form of worship. No parliament or legislative assembly imposes it. It is imposed by God whom Muslims accept as the only One who can be worshipped.

If a person wishes to safeguard his *iman* (faith) he will never try to evade or cheat in the payment of *zakat*. Even if there is no external force which may levy *zakat* and ask for accounts the true believer himself determines and pays the *zakat* which is obligatory on him. Then *zakat* is definitely not meant for the fulfilment of social needs as a whole from which the payer himself may benefit. It is meant for those persons alone who owing to various reasons have not been able to get their share, or their full share, of wealth and need help temporarily or permanently. This *zakat* both in its spirit and in its form is an entirely different thing from tax. It cannot be used for building roads, railways and canals or for the administration of the country. Instead it has been made obligatory by God as a part of worship to fulfil the rights

of certain groups. This is one of the five pillars of Islam and apart from the pleasure of Allah and the reward of the hereafter, the payer cannot benefit by it in any material sense.

Law of Inheritance

Islam has made a law of inheritance which aims at distributing whatever a person leaves at his death, a little or a lot, in as wide a circle as possible. Primarily this wealth belongs to the mother, father, wife and children. Then come brothers and sisters and then the near relatives. If a person leaves behind no descendants the entire nation inherits wealth and it is deposited in the *bait-ul-mal* (state treasury).

What Islam's Economic System Will Be Like

These are the principles and the limits which Islam has set for our economic life. Within these limits we can construct economic system as we wish. Details we ourselves will have to work out according to the needs of our age.

We will have to remember that we cannot establish a free economy like that of the capitalistic system and we cannot establish collective control over the entire economy like the communist system.

We will have to construct a free economy within certain limits and restriction; a society which will leave the way open for the moral development of man, where it would not be constantly necessary to use the law for the sake of the collective good.

This economy would be devoid of the immoral methods which produce unnatural class distinctions and between the classes which nature itself produces it would nurture cooperation instead of conflict. In this economic

system all those means of earning wealth which Islam has prohibited would be prohibited and all those ways would be permitted which Islam has permitted. On wealth acquired in ways permitted by Islam, individuals will have all those rights of ownership and use which Islam has conceded. *Zakat* will be obligatory and all those persons who possess wealth upto the fixed limit will have to pay it.

Inheritance will be distributed according to the law of inheritance. Within these limits individuals will have the full freedom to work for their living. No system which ties down the individual and takes away his freedom will be constructed. If on their own initiative people work justly and honestly the law will not interfere. However, if they do injustice or violate the set limits, or try to establish monopolies, which can be done without, then definitely the law will interfere. But this interference will not be used to take away their fundamental rights, it will only interfere to establish justice and to keep individuals within the ordained limits.

Muzar'at Mudarbat

This was in reply to the first part of the first question. Now let us come to the second question which is about the position of land, labour, capital and organisation in the framework of Islam's economy. To understand this position I would advise you to study the Law of *muzar'at* and *mudarbat* in Islamic jurisprudence. The early scholars of Islam have not discussed or written separate books on land, capital and organisation as is done by the contemporary scholars of economics. They have written on them in various chapters of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and the language and terms they use are different from those used now-a-days. But a person, who is not enslaved by terms

and labels and has an understanding of the content and problems of economics, can easily understand the economic concepts which have been expressed in the language of jurisprudence.

The law of *muzar'at* and *mudarbat* mentioned in our *fiqh* fully clarifies Islam's thought concerning land, labour, capital and organisation. *Muzar'at* means that land belongs to one person and another cultivates it and both share the fruits. *Mudarbat* means that one person has money and another does business with it and both share the profit. The way Islam has recognised in these two forms the rights of those who have capital and land as well as of those who work with them, clearly shows that from Islam's point of view and as well as labour put into it are economic factors.

Capital as well as human labour and organising ability is also economic factors. All these factors have the right of share in the profits. To begin with, Islam leaves it to the various factors to determine these shares between them and if people can deal justly with each other the law need not interfere. However, if these factors deal unjustly with each other it is the duty of the law to establish justice. For example, if I own land and have given it to a person on *batai* (share of produce) or hire someone to cultivate my fields, or give the land on contract to someone, and the terms on which I do this are just and acceptable then there is no need for the law to interfere. However, if I deal unjustly the law can interfere and fix regulations for *muzar'at* so that both, the owner of the land as well as those who work on it, get their rights. Similarly, in business as long as capital, labour and organisation can justly work out their arrangements, the law need not interfere; otherwise the law must interfere

and fix such just limits that none can be able to indulge in oppression and cruelty.

Zakat and Economic Welfare

Now take the second question. I have been asked whether *zakat* and *sadaqa* can be used for economic welfare? The answer is that *zakat* and *sadaqa* are meant for economic welfare and social uplift. But please understand that if by economic welfare you mean the economic development of the country as a whole then the use of *zakat* is not permitted for this purpose. As I said earlier the purpose of *zakat* is to fulfil the economic needs of those who are either, like orphans, the extremely old and the incapacitated, incapable of working for their livelihood, or are temporarily unemployed, or owing to lack of resources are unable to earn their livelihood and can stand on their own feet with a little help, or those who have been made helpless owing to losses. *Zakat* gives a helping hand to such people. For general economic development you will have to find other means.

Interest-free Economy

The third question is: can we establish an interest-free economic system? The answer is that definitely we can. For centuries such a system existed and today also, if you wish to establish it and give up following others blindly, it will not be difficult to do so. Before the advent of Islam, the world's economic system worked on interest just as it is working today. Islam changed all that and prohibited interest. First it was prohibited in Arabia. Then wherever the Islamic government reached, interest was prohibited and the whole economy worked without it. It worked for centuries. There is no reason why it should not work now. If we possess the power of *ijtihad* and a strong

faith and the determination to end all that God has prohibited then, without doubt, even today we can finish it and work out all our financial and economic affairs without it. In my book *Suud* (interest) I have made it clear that in fact this matter is not fraught with grave difficulties. The problem is clear and simple.

Capital does not have the right to appear in the shape of loan and to take a fixed profit regardless of whether those who labour with this money and put in organisational services earn any profits or not.

The real evil in interest is that a person or an institution gives its capital in the shape of loan to industry, trade or agriculture and fixes a certain profit for itself before hand. It is not interested in whether within a fixed limit the business being carried on yields profit or results in loss and if there is profit, how much it is. The capitalist goes on taking his fixed profit month by month or year by year and also retains his right to the original. This system we have to end. No one in the world can prove it reasonable. As opposed to this, the Islamic principle is that if you are giving a loan let it be a loan and you only have the right to take your loan back. And if you wish to make profits then you should straightforwardly become a shareholder or partner. Whether you put your money into agriculture, trade or industry it must be put with the condition that whatever profits accrue will be distributed between you and those who work with the money according to a certain ratio.

This is what justice demands and this can help economic life to flourish. What is the difficulty in ending the method of interest and in implementing this method? The money which is now given as loan will then be invested on the principle of sharing. This profit can be calculated in the same way as interest is calculated. This

does not present any insurmountable difficulties. The only trouble is our lack of independent thinking. We are in the habit of imitation and the propensity to tamely continue working with the conditions which already exist. We seldom try to work out things for ourselves. The poor *maulvi* is taunted that he follows his predecessors blindly and does not use *ijtihad*, although we ourselves are blind followers never ready for *ijtihad*. If we were free of this disease the problem would have been solved long ago.

Life A Healthy Tree

The last question is: what according to Islam, is the natural relationship between the economic, political, social and religious system? Their relationship is the same as that of the roots with the trunk and of the branches with the leaves. This is one whole and is the result of belief in the Oneness of God and in the prophethood of His messengers. This belief shapes the moral system and the system of worship, which you call the religious system. From it arises the social system which leads on to the economic system.

The political system too results from this belief. These things are like cause and effect. If you believe in God and His Prophet and accept the Qur'an as the Book of God then inevitably you have to use the moral principles which Islam teaches and will have to accept the political principles which it has given. The structure of the economy as well as the entire conduct of business will have to be according to Islamic principles. You will have to conduct your trade on the basis of the same beliefs which lead you to say your prayers. In your courts and in the market you will have to accept the regulations of the same faith which has regulated your fasting and your *Hajj*. In Islam the religious, the political, the economic and the

social are not separate systems; they are different departments and parts of the same system. They are coordinated with each other and gain strength from each other.

If no one believes in the Oneness of God and in the Prophethood, the economic system of Islam cannot be established and even if it is established it will collapse. Similarly Islam's political system cannot be established or run unless people believe in God and the Prophet and have faith in the Qur'an, because Islam's political system is established on the basis of the belief that God is the supreme sovereign and the Prophet is His representative and the Qur'an is His command which must be obeyed: thus it is simply absurd to think that in Islam there can be a political or economic system separated from an unrelated to its religious and moral system. A person who knows Islam and accepts it intelligently can never imagine that one can be free of Islam in politics and economics and yet live an Islamic life by following it only in religious affairs.

Postscript

(Maulana Maududi used to talk to people of all walks of life every evening between Asr and Maghreb prayers. In one such meeting some Ph.D. students were present and asked questions regarding economics and socialism in Islam. We publish them here along with Maulana's replies, courtesy "Ayeen" weekly, Lahore.)

Question: Maulana, when the term "Islamic democracy" is acceptable to us, why should the term "Islamic socialism" be not acceptable?

Answer. By democracy is meant that political system, in which the government is made according to the people and is changed according to their wishes. Now

there is a Western concept of democracy and an Islamic concept. The Western concept is that the supreme power vests in people and the final and decisive factor in all law-making is the choice of the people. The people's majority can turn the prohibited into the permitted and the permitted into the prohibited. In Islamic democracy too the government is made according to the wishes of the people, run according to their wishes and changed if they wish to change it. The vital difference, however, is that according to the Islamic concept of democracy, supreme power vests with Allah alone and the Muslims can legislate only within the bounds of the Islamic Shari'ah. Even by unanimous agreement they cannot prohibit anything which God has permitted or permit anything which God has prohibited. So, to differentiate between the all-powerful and unfettered democracy of the West and a democracy which works within the limits set by Allah it is correct to use the term Islamic democracy – in other words if the Western concept of sovereignty is replaced by the Islamic concept of sovereignty the root of all corruption is cut.

In sharp contrast the term Islamic socialism is incorrect as socialism is not merely the name of a political system rather it is an ideology and owing to its comprehensive political and social programme, it is a monolithic system, no single part of which can be removed from the whole: as a whole it is a "religion" in itself. Its concept of man and of the universe is entirely different from and in conflict with the Islamic concept of man and the universe. Its interpretation of history is totally materialistic and cannot accommodate religion and spiritual values. So, to add the word Islamic to socialism is just as if one were to talk of Islamic Christianity or

Islamic Buddhism, in an attempt to pass off these religions as Islamic.

Question: Maulana, some people object to the economic system of Islam on the ground that it maintains the existence of the rich and the poor and supports the class system. What is the correct position here?

Answer: Islam does not try to end the distinction of rich and poor in one flash, through some artificial brutal enforcement. It tries to reduce the difference between the two to the minimum, through various basic techniques. Islam, in fact, stands not for economic equality but for economic justice. As I have explained (elsewhere) the materialistic concept of economic equality is against nature and against justice, and has proved to be impracticable. However, the attainment of economic justice is a natural concept and Islam establishes it in actual practice. Economic justice means that all individuals in a society should have equal opportunity to progress. No artificial obstacles should be put in the way of a person who has the personal ability to do well. For example a poor person's son should not be forced to give up higher education just because he is a poor person's son. He will be given every opportunity to get a first class education and if he has the personal capabilities to reach the highest position, he will be given all the facilities to do so. Contrary to this if a rich person's son lacks ability, in an Islamic society; he will not be able to reach a high position, although he may be a rich person's son. It means that Islam, for the sake of economic justice, provides equality of opportunity. It is evident that when there is equality of opportunity there can be no static classes or groups as such. The formation of these classes will keep on shifting. If today a person is poor, tomorrow owing to his personal capabilities and hard work he can be rich and

if today a person is rich, tomorrow he can become poor if he is fool or a crook.

Question: But Maulana, as a rich man's son is born of rich parents he will be educated at Aitchison College¹ while the poor man's son, owing to his parent's poverty will go to an ordinary school.

Answer: Do you think the Islamic system will also contain Aitchison College for the off-spring of the rich? (for some moments there was complete silence in the meeting). The trouble with you people is that you try to think of the Islamic system in terms of the present conditions, although when the Islamic system comes everything will be changed. Both the poor and the rich will have the same facilities for education, medical help and other things. Their children will not study in different kinds of institutions. Islamic system is not another name for social privileges on the basis of the economic disparity!

Along with guaranteeing economic justice Islam uses the methods which put an end to social imbalances and contradictions. The first method is that as a matter of principle Islam puts some restrictions on the earning and accumulation of wealth. For example, in the methods of earning it distinguishes between *halal* and *haram* and imposes *zakat*, *sadaqaat*, etc. on the wealth acquired. The second method is that if, inspite of all opportunities, to earn for his daily bread and other basic needs then Islam guarantees him social security. It is the duty of an Islamic state to arrange for employment, clothing, dwelling, medical help and education for all citizens—irrespective of caste, creed or religion.

¹ A public school in Lahore where prohibitive fees make it possible only for the pampered rich class to send their children — Ed.

Question: The Islamic system, in its entirety, was established for a very short period, that is 30 years. Then it was replaced by kingship and bureaucracy. The question is: how can we expect it to function in the present changed conditions of life?

Answer: If you compare the history of Islam with that of other ideologies you will find that till today there is not one ideology which retained its original form for even a day. In all the ungodly ideologies which the world has seen there were amendments from the very first day and at every step their followers went back on the original principles.

On the other hand the Islamic system was established in its complete form on its ideological basis and established not for a day or two but for full thirty years, with complete success, over a very considerable area of the world. This is a proof of its truth and of the fact that it can be established in its true form and can remain in existence.
